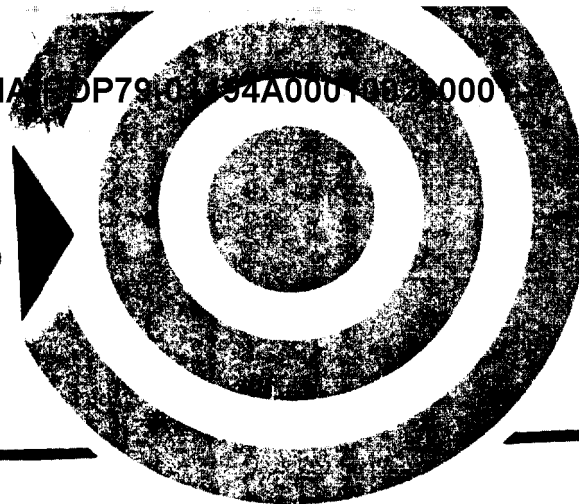


FEATURES



"My Country and the World," a review by Hans J. Morgenthau
New York Times Book Review, November 8, 1975

My Country and the World (excerpts) by Andrey Sakharov.
Translated by Guy V. Daniels. (109 pp.)

Professor Morgenthau's review provides an essentially positive summary of the latest essay by Andrey Sakharov, dissident Soviet physicist and winner of this year's Nobel Peace Prize. The essay offers revealing insights into Soviet society, official repression, and the dangers of Western illusions about Moscow. Morgenthau's review focusses on chapters dealing with disarmament and "the liberal intelligentsia;" it is forwarded, along with excerpts from the other chapters, for your background information. The excerpts may also be useful for replay, publicizing, and commentary.

Morgenthau applauds Sakharov's humanity but finds him naive, for example, in his "vague" suggestions for inducing the USSR to be more tractable on SALT. The review is also critical of Sakharov's "moral passion," his failure to distinguish "different shades of gray of which the political world is made," and his "harsh" generalities about the liberal intelligentsia. Nevertheless, Morgenthau concludes that the essay represents "those qualities... for which Sakharov indeed deserves the Nobel Peace Prize."

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My Country And the World

By Andrei D. Sakharov.

Translated by Guy V. Daniels.

109 pp. New York:

Alfred A. Knopf. Cloth, \$5.95.

Vintage Books, Paper, \$1.65.

By HANS J. MORGENTHAU

Andrei Sakharov has two great achievements to his credit: as a nuclear physicist he made an important contribution to Russia's development of the hydrogen bomb, and today he is the most eminent and active spokesman for dissidents in the Soviet Union. As Solzhenitsyn proclaims the freedom of the individual in the name of a Christian Russia so Sakharov proclaims that freedom in the name of universal moral norms of a secular nature. And for this he has just received the Nobel Prize for Peace. This book answers the legitimate question—what is the connection between unrelenting criticism of the policies of the Soviet Union and the promotion of international peace?

Sakharov attacks the totalitarian practices of the Soviet Government on moral grounds, and he exposes the inefficiencies and corruption of the Soviet regime for pragmatic reasons. According to him, these deficiencies are of concern not only to the peoples of the Soviet Union but threaten the peace of the world and, hence, concern all mankind, particularly the West. That ever-present potential threat becomes acute because of the gullibility of the West. "It is precisely the failure to understand what is hidden behind the Soviet facade and the potential dangers of Soviet totalitarianism that explains the many illusions of the Western intelligentsia and, in the final analysis, the amazing miscalculations and defeats of Western foreign policy, which without a struggle is yielding one concession after another to its partner in détente."

Sakharov does not oppose détente per se. He sees "great changes for the better" because of détente, "at least in the style of political dialogue and to some degree in more substantive areas." However, he notices "at the same time, a definite gap has opened between words and deeds, and the chances for the revival of dangerous illusions have increased."

Sakharov assumes that there is an organic relationship between the overall character of government, as reflected in its domestic practices and its behavior toward other nations. A government that rules its own citizens with ruthless brutality cannot expect to be trusted by the rest of the world. For this reason, Sakharov favors the rationale of the Jackson Amendment: tying United States trade concessions to changes in Soviet emigration policies. "The freedom to choose one's country of residence . . . is of great significance to all societies, both as a guarantee of many other basic rights and as a guarantee of international trust and of the openness of a society." He scolds the West for the "divisiveness, disorganization, and lack of affirmation," it displayed on the occasion of the Jackson Amendment.

In his previous essays, Sakharov primarily addressed his own countrymen. In his latest book he changes that focus and appears no longer to believe in the radical transformation of the Soviet Union from within; instead he appeals to the West to shed its illusions, unite and exert pressure upon the Soviet Union to encourage its internal change.

Sakharov is harsh in his criticism of the liberal intellectuals of the West. He sees them competing with their children in being up-to-date intellectually and politically. He sees them falling victim to illusions—about the nature of totalitarianism and Communist propaganda. That weakened state of mind, he warns, may cause the loss of Western unity in the face of the global threat of totalitarianism. Domestically, a country so misguided may slip into "state-capitalist totalitarian socialism." We must not allow "a

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weakening of the international defense of human rights throughout the world, with the same standards for the Englishman, the Frenchman, the black from the Republic of South Africa, the Crimean Tartar, the Russian, the Ukrainian, the Italian, and the Vietnamese."

What gives Sakharov's arguments their poignancy is, of course, the threat of nuclear war. "Saving mankind from the threat of thermonuclear destruction undoubtedly takes priority over all other problems." All of the specific proposals that Sakharov presents in this book are intended to serve this end. He offers four specific steps toward disarmament: a) a perfected system of verification, including inspections; b) a reduction of armaments, on the basis of parity, to a sufficiently low level; c) elimination of the factors that contribute to the arms race; d) elimination of the factors that foster strategic instability.

One cannot but conclude that if there steps were taken, the problem of disarmament would be solved. But how can the governments concerned be induced to take these steps? While it is one thing,

and useful, to define the rational requirements for disarmament, it is quite another, and crucial, to outline the political prerequisites. Sakharov himself recognizes that "the Soviet side has rigidly resisted verification." How does one break down that resistance? Sakharov's answer—"Making use of its real strength, good will, and determination, the West must oppose this rigid and unreasonable position with great firmness," obviously is too vague to be useful.

Sakharov is more politically aware when he points to "the danger that the strategic doctrine and practices of a totalitarian state may prove more ruthless toward all mankind, more adventurist, and more subject to accidents governed by personal factors and decisions secretly taken than is the case in a democratic state." What deters the United States may not indeed deter the Soviet Union.

What kind of man emerges from this book? A great man, no doubt, but one who bears some of the vices of his virtues.

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believable courage. To expose relentlessly and without pity, as Sakharov does, the deficiencies of the political, economic and social system of the Soviet Union and its ruling élite, while living in Moscow, makes one tremble for his safety.

His courage is informed and carried forward by a moral passion that proclaims the universal validity of moral norms that protect the individual and are binding upon citizen and government. It is his moral passion that makes Sakharov look with disdain upon the rulers of the Soviet Union and with envy upon the intellectuals of the West, while he castigates them for "leftist-liberal faddishness." The Western intellectuals have in good measure what he wants for the citizens of the Soviet Union—"inner freedom."

At times, however, that moral passion obscures Sakharov's view of the political world. Since he and those close to him are personally threatened by the Soviet system, he tends to attribute to it outrages against and threats to the individual throughout the world. Thus he holds the Soviet system is held responsible for much of the trouble in the Middle East, and for the plight of the Kurds, for what has happened in Indochina. His all-embracing moral passion, knowing only the difference between white and black, obliterates the fine and subtle distinctions between different shades of gray of which the political world is made; it makes the solutions of political problems, such as disarmament or secrecy in government, appear much easier than they actually are.

At its best, Sakharov's solitary cry on behalf of mistreated individuals and endangered nations has a prophetic quality. It transcends the limits of time and place. It speaks in terms of the eternal verities to all nations, to all governments and to all men. Sakharov even remembers the massacre of the Indonesian Communists in 1965 whom our moralists have written off because they were merely Communists, and he appeals to the President of Indonesia on behalf of those that have survived in jail.

Those are the qualities of mind and soul, thought and action, for which Sakharov, indeed, deserves the Nobel Prize

Excerpts from My Country And The World

"One dogma of the faith that has always figured in Soviet and pro-Soviet propaganda is the thesis of the uniqueness of the Soviet political and economic system, which (it is claimed) is the prototype for all other countries: the most just, humane, and progressive system, ensuring the highest labor productivity, the highest standard of living, etc.

"The more obvious the complete failure to live up to most of the promises in that dogma, the more insistently it is maintained. The facts do not compare favorably with the developed capitalist countries; so the need to prop up this dogma, and the hypnosis of blind belief, are among the causes of the secretiveness of Soviet society." (p. 13)

"It is especially significant that with resources like ours, after fifty-eight years of gigantic efforts, including thirty years of uninterrupted peace, we have nothing even faintly resembling the world's highest standard of living." (p. 15)

"Foreign visitors sometimes ask: Why, if you really have so many shortcomings, don't the people take steps to correct them? One of the reasons for the stability of the regime is the fact that living standards are rising, however slowly. Naturally, each person compares his life with his own poverty-stricken past. But there is a still more important factor: the immanent strength of the totalitarian regime - the inertia of fear and passivity. (p. 29)

"Ideological monism and intolerance, together with cold (although not wise) political calculation, are causing an unrelenting persecution of dissidents. In the USSR there are anywhere from 2,000 to 10,000 individuals who can be identified as political prisoners. (This figure does not include those suffering for their religious convictions. Apparently there are even more of the latter. I should also qualify this by saying that my information may be incomplete.) According to the Code now in force, all political prisoners are regarded as common criminals. They share with prisoners of other categories (often including innocent persons) the hardships and humiliations of a life the character of which is shameful and unacceptable in our time." (pp. 31-32)

"All of our country's relations with the rest of the world,... can be purposefully controlled in accordance with a single plan, a single will. All these specifics endow Soviet foreign policy with special traits: great dynamism and a pragmatic lack of principle. The latter is manifested, for example, in the support - by means of huge shipments of Soviet weapons - of the tyrannical regimes of Amin in Uganda, el-Qaddafi in Libya, and many other such countries. Also, our government has supported the genocide of the Ibo people in Nigeria, the Kurds in Iraq, etc., and exploited national, religious, and political enmities in many parts of the world for purposes of expansionism." (p. 47)

"A great deal depends upon how clear-cut and well-founded (the intelligentsia's) views are; upon the absence of illusions about those views; upon how well-organized the intelligentsia is; and upon its impartiality. I would hope that... members of the Western intelligentsia will more vigorously defend human rights in our nation and the other socialist nations: the right to the free choice

of one's country of residence; the rights of the ethnic minorities ... the rights of persecuted religious groups; the right to defense on the part of prisoners of conscience -." (p. 97)

Sakharov's List of Needed Internal Reforms (pp. 100-102):

"One. Broadening the economic reform of 1965 (which, as is known, has been rolled back to an earlier stage of implementation); full autonomy for plants, factories, etc., in matters of economics, production, and personnel policy.

"Two. Partial denationalization of all types of economic and societal activity, probably excluding heavy industry, major transportation, and communications. Partial denationalization is especially critical in the area of services (repair shops, hotels, restaurants, etc.), in retail trade, and in education and medical care. In agriculture we must have partial decollectivization and government encouragement of the private sector as the most productive and the one best able to help restore social and psychological health to the rural areas, now under the threat of a complete lapse into drunkenness and torpor....

"Three. Full amnesty for all political prisoners, including inmates of special psychiatric hospitals, and all persons convicted for their religious beliefs, national aspirations, and attempts to leave the country. Alleviating the lot of prisoners of all categories; elimination of forced labor; abolishing restrictions on nutrition, visits, mailings, and receipt of parcels; improving medical care; permitting the sending of medication by mail. Making all places of confinement accessible to international observers. Abolishing capital punishment. Giving amnesty to all those who have been imprisoned for more than fifteen years.

"Four. A law giving the freedom to strike.

"Five. A series of legislative acts guaranteeing real freedom of convictions, freedom of conscience, and freedom to circulate information. Eliminating several articles of the Criminal Code that contradict the above principles.

"Six. Legislation providing that the adoption of the most important decisions (both those international in scope and those of domestic socioeconomic and ecological significance) be publicly disclosed and subject to public accountability.

"Seven. A law assuring the freedom to choose one's place of residence and of employment within the country.

"Eight. Legislation guaranteeing the freedom to leave the country (emigration, or trips for one purpose or another) and to return to it.

"Nine. Banning all forms of Party and official privileges not directly required by the performance of official duties. Equal rights for all citizens as a basic principle of the state.

"Ten. Legislative confirmation of the right of Soviet republics to secede, and the right to discuss the question of secession.

"Eleven. A multiparty system.

"Twelve. Currency reform: the free exchange of rubles for foreign currency. Limitations of the foreign trade monopoly."